

REMARKS

Further and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Thus, claims 4 and 9 have been amended in response to rejection of these claims under the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112, to recite that the cellulose derivative is selected from the group consisting of carboxymethyl cellulose sodium, hydroxypropyl cellulose and hydroxymethyl cellulose. In this regard, please see the disclosure at page 9, lines 5-8 of the specification.

In view of these amendments, the rejection of claims 4 and 9 under the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112 has been rendered moot.

The patentability of the presently claimed invention over the disclosures of the references relied upon by the Examiner in rejecting the claims will be apparent upon consideration of the following remarks.

Thus, the rejection of claims 1-2, 5-6, 11, 14 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishida et al. is respectfully traversed.

In responding to Applicant's previous patentability arguments, the Examiner states that a mixture of hydrophilic fiber with a hydrophobic fiber may be used in the Ishida et al. reference, and the Examiner takes the position that this "mixture" would include entanglement.

However, there is no disclosure or suggestion of this entanglement in the Ishida et al. reference, which repeatedly refers to "a multi-layer" support having "a hydrophobic **layer** and a hydrophilic **layer**." (Emphasis added) For example, please see column 3, lines 7-9 of the reference. Also, note that the reference states that the multi-layer support is significantly different from the structure of conventional sheet packs using a non-woven fabric as a support (column 3, lines 56-60). There is no disclosure in the reference of a support consisting of a fiber film prepared by heat-fusing a soft plastic resin on a composite fiber prepared by **entangling a natural fiber and a soft plastic fiber**, as in the presently claimed invention.

For these reasons, Applicant takes the position that presently claimed invention is clearly patentable over the Ishida et al. reference.

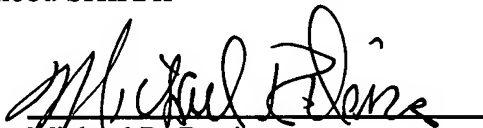
The rejection of claims 4, 8-9, 13, 15, 19 and 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishida et al. in view of Misumi et al. is respectfully traversed.

The comments set forth above concerning the Ishida et al reference are equally applicable to this rejection. Since the Misumi et al. reference also fails to disclose or suggest the support of the present invention, the subject matter of the claims is considered to be patentable even if Ishida et al. and Misumi et al. are combined.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is submitted that each of the grounds of rejection set forth by the Examiner has been overcome, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such allowance is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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